

CONNOR

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The magazine for the Diocese of Connor **Summer 2018**

Century of courage, daring & innovation

Belfast Cathedral was packed on April 29 for a service to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Air Force (RAF).

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, was joined by his counterpart from the Irish Air Corps, Brigadier General Sean Clancy. Both read lessons during the service.

In his welcome, the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, said: "While today is a day to look back with pride over 100 years of courage, daring and innovation across the history of the RAF, this is also a day to look forward with those of you who are today's Air Cadets, and whose vision is for the RAF's future."

Special guests included the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast City Council, Councillor Sonia Copeland, Lord Lieutenants from across Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and four Northern Ireland MPs. Eleven WW2 RAF veterans and descendants of former serving airmen from across Ireland were also present.



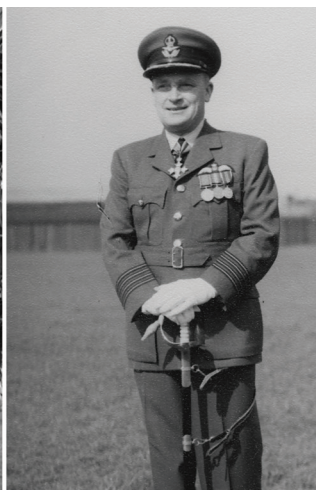
Pictured are, from left: the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier; The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde; the General Officer Commanding Irish Air Corps, Brigadier General Sean Clancy; and Shailesh Vara MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

A life-sized replica WW2 Spitfire aircraft owned by Ulster Aviation Society was on display in Writers Square.

The sermon was preached by the Rev Dr (Wg Cdr) David Richardson and there was music from the Cathedral Choir, the RAF Band and Assistant Organist, Dr Ed Jones.

An Altar crafted from a propeller, a Royal Auxiliary Air Force Standard and a commemorative stone stood at the front of the Cathedral and wreaths were laid there during the service.

The WB Yeats poem 'An Irish Airman foresees his death' was read by Robin Murray Brown, great-grandson of Major William Robert Gregory MC.



Dedicated service to the RAF through three generations. Rev Nicholas Dark's great grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Albert E Dark; grandfather, Group Captain A Edward Dark CBE; and father, Squadron Leader Michael E Dark.

Three generations of RAF service

A celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force in Belfast Cathedral on April 29 was a poignant day for many, including the Rev Nicholas Dark, rector of Magheragall Parish, and his family.

Nicholas is the direct descendant of three generations who served, father to son, since the foundation of the Royal Air Force on April 1 1918. He was accompanied to the service of commemoration by his wife Bronwen, their children, Alison, Andrew and Claire, and his mother Ann.

Nicholas' great grandfather, Flight Lieutenant Albert E Dark, received his commission on April 1 1918, having served in the Royal Navy and Royal Naval Air Service throughout World War One. The Royal Naval Air Service and Royal Flying Corps were amalgamated to form the RAF, the first independent Air Force in the world. Albert served until he was injured during the Battle of Britain. He died in 1942.

His son, Group Captain A Edward Dark CBE, Nicholas' grandfather, graduated as a pilot from the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, and received his commission in 1928. He served through World War Two.

Eddie worked with Barnes Wallis on the development of the bouncing bomb of 'Dambuster' fame, amongst other experimental armaments; he received the military CBE in recognition of this work.

He was a member of the United Kingdom Scientific Team sent to Japan to investigate the results of the Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He retired in 1956, and died in 1997.

His son, Squadron Leader Michael E Dark, Nicholas' father, graduated as a pilot from

the Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, and received his commission in 1952.

Mike flew, as Captain, on the Short Sunderland Flying Boat, on 209 squadron, Far East Flying Boat Wing, completing 65 sorties in the Korean War, and the Malayan Emergency. On returning to the United Kingdom, he joined 230 Squadron, Coastal Command, stationed at RAF Pembroke Dock, again flying the Sunderland. The squadron was detached to RAF Castle Archdale on a number of occasions.

Following a conversion course at RAF Kinloss, he flew the Shackleton MK3, as Flight Commander on 201 squadron, stationed at RAF St Mawgan. The role of Coastal Command squadrons during the Cold War was the Air and Maritime protection of the United Kingdom.

Michael died on February 2 2016. He and Ann have four children. Nicholas is the only one to remain in Northern Ireland. Other family members will attend commemoration events elsewhere in the UK. The family plans to place memorial stones in memory of Albert, Eddie and Michael in the National Memorial Arboretum, and will all attend a service of dedication there next year.

Nicholas was ordained in June 1998. He has been rector of Magheragall Parish since 2005. He is also Honorary Chaplain to The Aircrew Association NI, and Honorary Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, Lisburn Branch.

Summer 2018

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Cover photo:


The beauty of creation. A summer flower. Photo: Karen Bushby




Please contact us if you would like to contribute to the next issue of 'Connor Connections.'

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'A place of peace in a world of pressures'

The 14th Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, was installed in St Anne's Cathedral at Choral Evensong on Sunday February 4.

Dean Forde, formerly Archdeacon of Dalriada and rector of the Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo, was also instituted as Incumbent of the Cathedral Parish.

The service was attended by the Bishops of Connor and Down and Dromore, representatives of community life in the city, visiting bishops and leaders of the other main denominations in Northern Ireland, and the Dean-elect's family, friends and former parishioners.

The service was led by the Cathedral Choir and the Larne Concert Choir with the St Cedma's Singers (Larne Parish), and members of the Brass section of the Ulster Orchestra. The former Dean of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Dublin, the Very Rev Victor Stacey, read the first lesson, and the second lesson was read by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Sonia Copeland. The preacher was the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

During the service, the Dean-elect was presented for institution into the Cathedral Parish by the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven George Davison, and the Act of Institution was conducted by the Bishop of Connor. Archdeacon Forde was installed as Dean of Belfast by Archdeacon Davison, accompanied by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Miller.

He was then presented to the people by

the Bishop of Connor, and welcomed by the Very Rev Martin Graham, Administrator of St Peter's Cathedral, on behalf of all the church leaders.

The formal institution and installation of the new Dean was followed by the commissioning, when the Dean was presented with symbols of the teaching, pastoral and sacramental ministry of an incumbent. These included a Bible, a container of water, a Book of Common Prayer, bread and wine, oil, the key to the Cathedral and a towel.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession were offered by clergy from the Larne area. The Benedictine Monks of the Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor, sang the responses.

Speaking ahead of the installation, Dean Forde said: "I hope the Cathedral will be a place where people who are rushed and hassled by life's demands will find rest and refreshment, a place of peace in a world of many pressures. I also hope the Cathedral will be a place of ecumenical encounter, a place where bridges are built and barriers dismantled. Above all, I pray this will be a place where people discover how much they matter, because they will discover how much they matter to God."

Bishop Alan said the new Dean would bring his special God-given gifts to enable the Cathedral to continue to touch the lives of many.



Church leaders from different denominations welcome the new Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, during the Service of Installation on Sunday February 4.

Lorraine enjoying her new role

Mrs Lorraine Ogilby has taken over as PA to the Bishop of Connor following the retirement of Mrs Rosemary Patterson.

A native of Newtownabbey, Lorraine, nee O'Brien, was a parishioner at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Monkstown. She attended Belfast High School and later Newtownabbey Technical College where she gained a Medical Secretary Diploma.

Lorraine worked as a medical secretary in the Royal Victoria Hospital before moving to a hospital in Abu Dhabi in 1991, returning home to Whiteabbey Hospital after three years when her contract in the Middle East ended.



PA to the Bishop of Connor, Mrs Lorraine Ogilby.

Lorraine married her childhood sweetheart Michael and the couple moved to Ballyclare. She returned to the Royal Victoria Hospital as a medical secretary until 2002 when she became PA to the Chief Executive of the Regional Medical Physics Agency.

She remained in this job until she joined the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy and his team at Connor Diocese in March this year.

Lorraine has two sons, Jacob aged 20 and Jude aged 18. She is a parishioner of St John's, Ballyclare, and has been on the Select Vestry for the past 10 years. She is currently secretary, and is a member of the parish choir and a leader of the BB Anchor Boys.

Lorraine enjoys crafts, and four years ago took up running. Lorraine said: "I am enjoying my new role because the Church of Ireland is very familiar to me. I am a cradle Anglican.

"I am looking forward to working with Bishop Alan and his team and to meeting all the clergy. I hope to bring a new insight to the job and I am very excited to be working for the Church."



Retiring Bishop's PA, Mrs Rosemary Patterson, front, centre, flanked by Bishop Alan Abernethy and Rosemary's successor, Mrs Lorraine Ogilby, other colleagues, and clergy from across Connor Diocese.

Clergy say farewell to PA Rosemary

Clergy from all corners of Connor Diocese gathered at Belfast Cathedral on March 22 to say farewell to Mrs Rosemary Patterson, Personal Assistant to the Bishop of Connor, who has retired.

Rosemary was full-time Secretary / PA to Bishop Alan Abernethy since he became Bishop of Connor 10 years ago, and was part-time secretary to his predecessor, Bishop Alan Harper, for three years before that.

At the farewell gathering, the Rev Canon George Graham, the longest serving clergyman in the diocese, paid tribute to Rosemary on behalf of his colleagues.

"I have never known a person to be held in as high esteem or as deep affection as Rosemary, so it is a great honour for me to speak today," Canon Graham said.

He reflected on Rosemary's career with the church which began in 1965, when she worked with Church Mission Society (CMS) Ireland for four years before moving to the diocesan office for Connor and Down and Dromore, then based in May Street, in 1969.

In 1976 she took some time out following the birth of her daughter Helen. Rosemary returned to work in the Diocesan Office in 1989, and later worked in Stewardship, Board of Education and with the Bishops.

"You are a real servant of the church," Canon Graham said. "Your commitment to the diocese has been exemplary. You brought to the job so many skills and great dedication.



Smiles and tears! Rosemary and Bishop Alan at the event at which clergy said their farewells to 'Mrs P!'

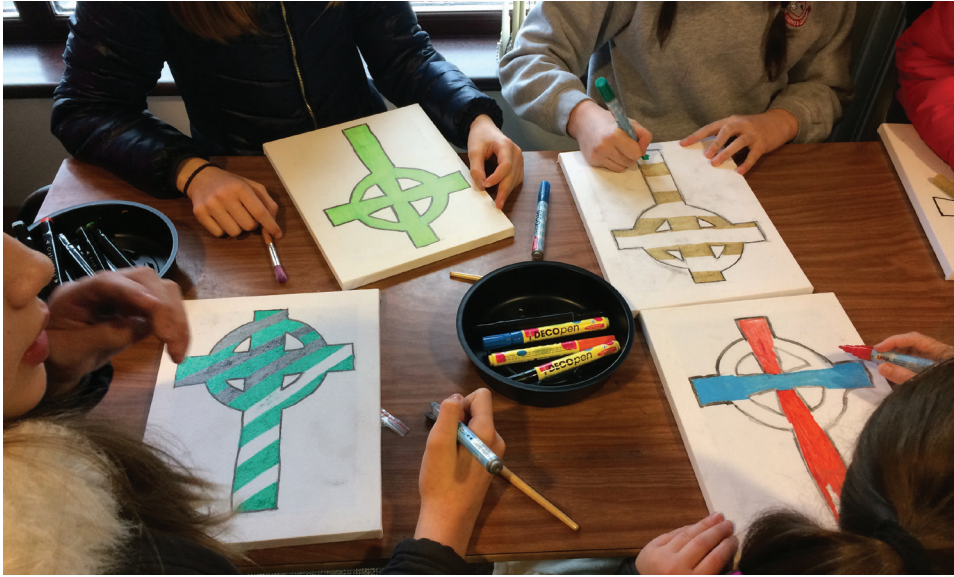
"Never once have you been anything less than professional and very warm in your welcome and greeting. Your caring attitude lifts one enormously and the speed you can get space in the Bishop's diary resonates your care for all the clergy in the diocese."

Presenting Rosemary with a gift from Connor clergy, Canon Graham said: "Thank you for your encouragement and love to us clergy."

The Very Rev Sam Wright, Dean of Connor, presented Rosemary with a bouquet of flowers.

Clearly moved, Rosemary thanked all the clergy for their kindness, help and especially for their friendship, and urged them all to continue to look out for their Bishop.

Broughshane hosts Patrick's Adventure



St Patrick's, Broughshane, hosted this year's Patrick's Mysterious Adventure – a four-day event all about Ireland's patron saint which enthralled pupils from local schools before opening to the public on March 17.

More than 200 people came along to enjoy the interactive story trail, and children's craft workshops.

The adventure began on Wednesday March 14, when pupils from four schools attended to take part in a history workshop looking at St Patrick's life and an art workshop, drawing Celtic crosses.

The children also followed the interactive story trail, where actors brought the story of Patrick to life, showing Patrick's capture by pirates, slavery in Ireland and escape.

The story moved on to Patrick's calling by God which eventually led him back to

Ireland as a bishop. On day two, children from four more schools took part, and on Friday three schools were involved.

The acting cast was led by Ross Jonas and Chris Neilands from the 'Play It By Ear' drama company, along with Aimee Gibson, Victoria Jackson, Andrew Neill and Stephen Whitten, members of Connor's Children's and Youth Councils, as well as Richard Reade, Violet Lucas, Amanda Gregg and Sarah Gamble, from Broughshane Parish.

Special visitors on the first day included Archdeacon Paul Dundas and Keith Turner from UUP leader Robin Swann's office.

Each day there were prizes for competitions, including the 'Design and colour a snake pattern' and the 'Design a 3D snake' class competition!

Connor Children's Officer Jill Hamilton said: "Teachers commented that their pupils were enthralled throughout the story trail and were listening very well."

On Saturday, when the event opened up to the public, additional activities were provided by Jumping Clay and the Spotty Dog Craft Studio.

Jill expressed thanks to Cathy and her team from Broughshane Parish who ran a café. Thanking the rector, the Rev Andrew Campbell, she said the enthusiasm and willingness of parishioners had made this a real joint venture.

"It was brilliant to work in partnership with them and because of their help the event was a great success," Jill said. She made special mention of Sarah Gamble, the main organiser from the parish, and the Rev Canon Stuart Lloyd who led the history workshop for the schools groups.

Agherton supports Baby Basics

Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton travelled to Agherton Parish on Pentecost Sunday to collect donations for the Baby Basics initiative.

Baby Basics is run by Connor's Centre of Mission in Shankill Road. Speaking at the Pentecost Sunday Service, Jill said: "These items don't stay in storage for long, as Baby Basics Belfast is proving to be a very well-used resource."

Last year the project supported 53 families and so far this year, more than 60 families have received Baby Basics packs.

Easter Egg fun at Belfast Cathedral

Belfast Cathedral hosted 'The Biggest Indoor Easter Egg Hunt in Belfast' on Easter Tuesday, with more than 200 children coming to join in the fun.

As well as the egg hunt, there were arts and crafts organised by Jill Hamilton, Connor Children's Project Development Officer, and the Belfast Cathedral Easter Trail devised by Visitor Services Manager Helen Graham.

Dean Stephen Forde was on hand to give out prizes to every child.





Country singing star the Rev Jason Kernohan at home in the Rectory at Eglantine.

Rev Jason is just a country boy at heart

He may have given up his career as a country music singer when he chose to be ordained, but the Rev Jason Kernohan can still get the feet tapping when he takes to the stage.

The rector of All Saints', Eglantine, recently featured on the BBC NI television programme 'Keepin' er Country,' recording Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire' with the Rev David McBeth, another country-loving clergyman!

And he was one of the stars of a sell-out concert in his own parish hall on April 19 which raised over £3,000 for parish funds!

Jason grew up in Ballymena listening to his dad William and mum Sylvia's country LPs, and was still at school when he started doing gigs in hotels and sports and social clubs. Aged 16, he joined a band, and a year or so later set up his own two-piece – 'The Jason Kernohan Band' – with his friend Nigel Black.

"I was playing every weekend. It is a great

incentive to come home with money in your pocket," he said. "I sang and played the midi-accordion, and Nigel was on keyboards."

After his A Levels, Jason decided to take a year out to do music - and never went back to studying until he started Theological College!

"I was taken on by a promoter here and started to do a lot of work in Scotland and England. At that time it would have been quite unusual for people our age to be 'the band,' but not any more."

He recorded his first CD in 2000, which sold well, and went on to record two other albums and a DVD.

Jason spent a fortnight in America in 2001,

arriving a month after the 9/11 attacks. He had gigs in Queen's and Long Island, and played an Irish Festival in the Catskill Mountains. But he was relieved to return home. "I didn't like the pace of life and all the travelling between venues," he said. "I was 21 at the time. I was offered the opportunity to go back for another two months, but declined to go."

He continued to be in demand in the UK. "The buzz you get out of entertaining is difficult to explain, it is partly due to the appreciation people show," he said. "It was certainly a good foundation for ministry. There were people who came to see me and tell me all their problems. I made so many friends and I still get letters from people asking what I am doing."

Church has always played a key role in Jason's life. He attended St Patrick's, Ballymena, and later moved to St Columba's after being asked to play the organ to cover a holiday. He went on to join the choir. "When I was in England and Scotland I always looked for an Anglican Church to go along to," he said.

In 2004, Jason was a Parish Reader. "I started thinking about ordination in my early 20s. Most people would have joined the Fellowship of Vocation for a year before going for selection – I was in it for years!"

Jason began his theological training in September 2007. "Most of my friends knew how I felt so it did not come a shock to them," Jason said. "I had a shock myself when I met Brian Lacey (now rector of St Peter and St James, Belfast) at the Fellowship of Vocation. We were at school together!"

Jason was ordained for the curacy of the Parish of Drumachose, Limavady, Diocese of Derry, where he remained for five years until his institution as rector of Eglantine in July 2015.

While in Limavady he continued to make music, doing concerts with local priest Father Eddie Gallagher, whose speciality was rock and roll and who did a mean Elvis! PEACE III funding allowed the duo to record a CD entitled 'In Sunshine or In Shadow' from the lyrics of 'Danny Boy' – Jane Ross, known for having written down the melody to 'Danny Boy,' is buried in the graveyard at Drumachose.

The CD raised £10,000 which was split between Jason's parish and Fr Eddie's Parish Church, St Mary's. The cross community grant also enabled the two clergymen to attend various conferences, even meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury's former envoy and Beirut prisoner Terry Waite.

Jason was pleasantly surprised when he moved to find Eglantine very much in tune with himself! "I was very pleased to find that I have a very musical congregation, and I have been able to put on concerts in the parish and the town. It is brilliant!" he said.

But Jason isn't tempted to slip into country music mode when taking services. "I always try to keep it separate. When people see me officiating, I am very traditional.

"It is a big transition moving from curate to rector, and I have a wonderfully supportive congregation. They are always willing to help in any way they can. They are very faithful. And they are very social!"

Jason has organised a country music concert each year since he arrived in Eglantine. Last year the special guest was TV and radio personality Hugo Duncan, and at this year's sold-out concert the celebrity guest was rising young star Owen Mac, just 15-years-old!

The 'Keepin' er Country' show, aired on BBC NI at the start of April, was also shown on RTE's 'Stetsons and Stilettos.' It has turned the Rev Jason into something of a local celebrity – he has been recognised when out and about!



Jason and the Rev David McBeth featured in the BBC programme 'Keepin' er Country.' Jason's dog Shelly is also pictured.

The banter between Jason and the Rev David McBeth, rector of Clooney Parish, Diocese of Derry, certainly provided good entertainment, and their duet is a popular number on David's new CD.

Jason says there has been an upsurge in young singers on the country scene, people like Nathan Carter, Cliona and Derek Ryan. "Today there is a very fine line between country music and pop. The music is much more upbeat and is very popular in rural areas, especially in the south. Line dancing is on its way out, it is now all about country jive," he said.

His wardrobe still boasts a selection of glitzy shirts. "In country music I think you have to be a wee bit glam sometimes. I still wear a sparkly shirt today if I'm asked to perform in concerts. I absolutely love it and it's black so it suits me very well," he said.



Jason singing at the Country Music concert in Eglantine Parish on April 19.

Jason has discovered he can combine his country singing with his job as rector. "God is not confined to church. God is everywhere," he said. "I still love the opportunity to perform. I sing at the afternoon tea dance at Halftown Hall, and I occasionally do a full concert. But I always say I cannot guarantee that I will be there. I am rector of Eglantine before anything else."

Retirement after 27 years in Glencairn

After 27 years of ministry in Glencairn, the Rev Ken Houston conducted his final service for the congregations of St Andrew's and St Columba's on January 28.

In his sermon about the 'new things' God had created, Ken mentioned the 'new things' he was personally involved with, namely Training for Ordination into the Auxiliary Ministry of the Church during the early 1980s, and his appointment along with Captain Scott McDonald to ministry in St Andrew's, this being the first time that a stipendiary lay minister and an Auxiliary Minister (clergy) were appointed as a team to lead a parish.

Ken also spoke about the 'new things' in store for the parish in the future.

After a buffet lunch, speeches were made and retirement gifts were presented to Ken and his wife Patricia.



The Rev Ken Houston and his wife Patricia at the buffet lunch following his last service in Glencairn.

Memorial Lecture

More than 180 people attended the third annual Clive West memorial lecture at All Saints' Church, Belfast, on February 20.

The speaker was Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, President of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue and former Bishop of Rochester.

Church Life Engage! event in November

A Church Life event taking place in Belfast on November 13 is aimed at helping churches engage in meaningful ways with local community life.

At 'Engage!', Diane Holt (Thrive Ireland) will lead a practical discussion on how to bring your church life and the Good News into your local community. Visit www.churchresourcesonline.com for more information.



Time for refreshments in Jordanstown!



Bishop Alan delivers his Lent Seminar in Lisburn Cathedral. Photo: Reg Haslett.

Lent Seminars 2018

The severe winter weather meant the Bishop of Connor was only able to deliver this year's Lent seminar on 'God's Mission and the Church Today' on two rather than three occasions.

The first lecture, scheduled for Dunluce Parish Centre, Bushmills, on March 5, was cancelled because of heavy snow. Thankfully Bishop Alan Abernethy's talks in Jordanstown on March 15 and Lisburn Cathedral on March 20 did go ahead, with around 100 people attending each seminar.

Bishop Alan's talk focused on his five Marks in Mission, and he suggested ways people could further their own mission.

He told his audiences that Mission means 'being sent.' "We are sent by Jesus as He was sent by the Father and we are equipped by the Holy Spirit," the Bishop said. "This sending is rooted in our own discipleship and we are bound together in

Christ to find encouragement and strength in each other."

There was a break for refreshments and fellowship mid-way through each evening, and Bishop Alan responded to a number of questions at the end.



John Quigley, Ken Gibson and Tom Stevenson at the Lisburn seminar.



Vernon Lendrum, Jane Waugh and Lynne Neill, from St Patrick's, Jordanstown, at the Jordanstown seminar.



Bishop Alan addresses the Jordanstown seminar.



Karen Webb, Connect Base, Christina Baillie, Diocesan Youth Officer, and the Rev Danielle McCullagh, curate, Lisburn Cathedral, at the Lisburn seminar.



Bishop Alan in Lisburn with, from left: Dean Sam Wright, Grace Broddle, Lydia Kerr, the Rev Danielle McCullagh and Erin Gardiner.



The Rev Canon Mark Taylor takes notes in Jordanstown.



Church and Christian community representatives who attended the launch of north Belfast ReLENTless Prayer in St Michael's on February 2. Seated, from left, are: Mrs Heather Carson, Parish Development Officer, Church of Ireland Lower Shankill; Stephen Whitten, North Belfast Centre of Mission; the Rev Canon James Carson, Church of Ireland Lower Shankill; Liam Cluskey, Lamb of God Community, and Sister Karen Webb, North Belfast Centre of Mission.

North Belfast is blessed with prayer

Churches and Christian communities in north Belfast came together for 40 days of ReLENTless prayer, offering community prayer space during the entire Lent period.

The initiative was driven by the Church of Ireland Lower Shankill Ministry Team, headed by the Rev Canon James Carson, rector, and his wife Heather, parish development officer.

It had the support of more than 20 local churches and Christian communities, with Gordon College, an evangelical, non-denominational college near Boston, USA, also joining this wave of prayer for communities in north Belfast.

The initiative was launched in St Michael's, off the Shankill Road, on February 2. Canon Carson told the gathering he had moved to Lower Shankill after 17 years in St Paul's, Lisburn, shortly after clergy in Lisburn had organised 40 days of ReLENTless prayer. "It was the last big thing we were involved in before leaving St Paul's," he said. "We had a prayer room and it was one of the best things we had ever had in the parish."

Heather agreed. "ReLENTless prayer had such an impact in Lisburn and such an impact on us," she said.

"We are great believers in partnership. We can plough our own furrow, but in partnership we can have a much bigger impact in north Belfast than if we do it alone. Our vision is that as churches we set an example to the community by working together."

ReLENTless Prayer focused on praying

for six core topics: Family life; mental health; schools; peace and reconciliation; local businesses; and growth in good neighbourliness among Christian churches and communities.

Heather said the initiative had been a great success and the response from everyone was extremely positive. "Congregations with little or no experience of creative prayer provided spaces which were quiet, contemplative, interactive, bright and beautiful," she said.

Having visited most of the 20+ creative prayer spaces, Canon Carson said: "The blessing that this initiative has brought to so many people is very significant. Clergy and faith community leaders are delighted with the way in which people have engaged with 'ReLENTless' and are looking forward to seeing the initiative grow and develop in north Belfast."

A tangible record of the event is the 'ReLENTless' Journal which was available in the prayer spaces. Stephen Whitten, evangelist at the North Belfast Centre of Mission, Connect Base, said many beautiful drawings, prayers, scripture verses and personal reflections can be seen in the Journal

"The Journal gave opportunity for people to express their thoughts in many different ways and it will be a source of inspiration between now and our next 'ReLENTless' adventure during Lent 2019," he said.

Comedian Tim hands over £126,000

Representatives of 212 charities gathered at Belfast Cathedral on March 4 for the annual Good Samaritans Service.

The proceeds of the 41st Black Santa Sit-out last December were handed out by special guest, actor and comedian Tim McGarry. They included a donation of £20,000 to Christian Aid for projects overseas. The total distributed was £126,000.

Tim said the gathering of charities and community organisations and the great public support for the annual Black Santa Sit-out were 'testament to the spirit of the people of Northern Ireland.'



At the Good Samaritans Service are, back row from left: Lesley Hammond, Fishermans' Mission; Grace Koch, SOS Bus; and Ingrid Perry, Fishermans' Mission. Front, from left: Actor and Comedian Tim McGarry, who was special guest at the service; Penny Stanley, Assistance Dogs NI with Gracie; and the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde.

Charity cheque presentations

Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, has presented cheques totalling more than £4,000 to representatives of the charities Action Multiple Sclerosis (Action MS) and Stepping Stones NI.

The funds were raised through donations made as part of Christ Church's 175th Anniversary celebrations, and a cheque for £2,006 was presented to a representative from each charity on February 4.

Claire quizzes Bishop

During Holy Week, the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, took part in an interview session with BBC 'Songs of Praise' presenter Claire McCollum in St Mark's Church, Ligonell Road, Belfast.

Priest-in-Charge, the Rev Campbell Dixon MBE, said: "I had invited Claire to interview Bishop as part of the Holy Week activities in mid/north Belfast but I think Bishop Alan turned the tables now and again!



Lisburn Cathedral team members with Yei pastors who attended the Retreat in Arua.

Supporting Abaana and Yei refugees

A team from Lisburn Cathedral travelled to Uganda with Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) and local charity Abaana in April.

They began in the capital Kampala, working with Abaana projects, before spending time with Bishop Hilary of Connor's partner Diocese of Yei in Arua in northern Uganda.

Bishop Hilary and hundreds of thousands of refugees from South Sudan currently live in the camps in this part of Uganda, having had to flee their homes due to ongoing civil

war. A team from the Cathedral had hoped to go to South Sudan in 2016 but due to the outbreak of war this was put on hold.

The team was made up of the rector, the Very Rev Sam Wright, Dean of Connor, his wife Paula, Margaret and Denis Fullerton and Jill and Martin Lester.

On their first Sunday, the team had a

wonderful experience worshipping for more than two hours at All Saints' Cathedral in Kampala. Afterwards they met with the Abaana Children's Choir which visited Lisburn early last year. "All the children were asking after their friends in Lisburn Cathedral and said hello," the team reported.

During the week, they visited the Heroes Street Kids project. Boys who live on the streets of Kampala give a commitment to attend classes twice a week. They get a shower, have lessons, and get a small meal. "The project is their ray of hope," the team said.

"When they come into the room, there is a transformation from the scavenging on the streets and dumps, to a structured learning environment and clean haven twice a week for them. The children are so trusting of the haven that they opened up to us without any fear."

The team also visited one of the Abaana New Life Homes, where selected boys have their own bed and box of belongings for the first time since they ended up on the street.

The New Life home is deliberately kept basic as it is only ever seen as a temporary solution for the boys as the aim is to reunite them with a family member wherever possible.

A highlight for the team was the visit to meet Derek (who is sponsored by the Cathedral Youth Group, 'Mettle') at his school. "It was very encouraging to hear him talk of his studies, his support for other pupils and his desire to one day become a



Meeting Abaana children in Kampala.

Pastor," Dean Sam said.

After their experience in Kampala, the team travelled to Arua where they were met by Bishop Hilary. On Sunday April 15 they visited the OCEA Zone of the Rhino Refugee Camp. Dean Sam, Paula and Jill took part in the service at Unity Church with Bishop Hilary, whilst Denis, Margaret and Martin took part at the nearby Peace Church.

Bishop Hilary told the team: "While they [the refugees] have endured great tragedy, your visit will remind them that are not forgotten."

Members found their preconceptions of the conditions at Rhino Camp were incorrect. "Our expectation that the camp would be a tightly-packed seething mass of humanity was completely wrong. There is a well ordered community of well-spaced tukals throughout the area of the overall Rhino Camp, which is spread over a number of zones within which there are districts," they said.

"The camp as a whole is so large that we were driven for one and a half hours, and were yet still only just beyond the centre. The camp has a current population of some 87,800 people - mainly women and children as the men have stayed behind to fight the war in South Sudan, or have been killed."

But the team said this camp is still not home for the South Sudanese. "There is the uncertainty as to how long they will be there, and they do not know what they will return to when they do go back to South Sudan. Whilst they do have a community, it is only one that can survive on a temporary basis; long term there would need to be a better structure of schooling, farming and business."



Dean Sam and the team lead the retreat for Yei pastors.

The team said that the people's desire was to return home to South Sudan, but, despite a perception that Yei Town may be safe, it is understood that outside of the town it is still dangerous.

Linda Abwa, Partnership co-ordinator from CMS Ireland, joined the team on Monday April 16, at the start of a week-long residential Clergy Retreat for pastors from the South Sudan Zones of the Rhino Camp, with 33 pastors taking part.

In his opening address at the pastors' retreat, Bishop Hilary said: "This is the first opportunity that these pastors have had to be able to meet together since they left South Sudan two years ago. This week will be a time for them to have fellowship and to support and strengthen each other."

During the retreat the team heard many heart rending stories of people losing their homes, family members, their churches being burned, and having to hide in the bush for up to two years before eventually arriving at the refugee camp in Arua.

There were also many amazing and miraculous accounts of how people like Rev Peter Taban (Principal of Bishop Alison Theological College) trusted Christ to deliver him from certain death when troops surrounded the college and set it on fire with him inside.

As the week progressed, many of the pastors began to bridge the gap between the rawness of their escape from the conflict in Yei, South Sudan, to the place of strength that they need to be in to guide their flocks in the refugee camps.

At the end of the retreat, the pastors comments included:

- We are relieved from the trauma that we have been living with.
- We have acquired new knowledge and skills to enable us to help our people.
- The presence of the CMS Ireland Mission Partners made us to feel not forgotten.

The ladies on the team travelled with Mama Joyce and members of the Mothers' Union on a visit to Rhino Camp to present 'Dignity Packs' for women. There was great excitement as they assisted in distributing the 'Dignity Packs'.

On their third Sunday in Uganda, they travelled again to the Rhino Camp (Ofua Zone) to take part in two energetic church services, with Sam, Paula and Martin at Bethlehem church, and Denis, Margaret and Jill at Jerusalem church.

At each church they visited, and also on the Retreat, Dean Sam brought greetings from the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, who had led the last Pastors' Conference held in Yei during his visit there in 2013.

Dean Sam also brought greetings from the people of Connor Diocese and from Lisburn Cathedral.



Dean Sam Wright (right of picture) and team members greeted by Bishop Hilary (in white) and others from Yei Diocese on their arrival at the camps in Arua, northern Uganda.



All Saints' Church, University Street, Belfast, held a Church Family Weekend at Castlewellan Castle in February. At one point, there were nearly 130 people enjoying time together, listening to God's word, praying, and having fun! Speaker was the Rev Lee McMunn from Scarborough in England. Lee is the minister at a growing church plant in the area, and mission director of AMiE, the Anglican Mission in England.

Fellowship Café going strong after four years

Anyone fancying a cuppa in the Carrickfergus area on a Thursday morning can pop into the Holy Trinity Woodburn Fellowship Café, which has recently celebrated its fourth anniversary.

This not-for-profit initiative provides an opportunity for fellowship over a cup of tea, and over the four years it has also raised £14,000 for more than 40 charities.

The Fellowship Café is run by Anne and Maurice Langley and a team of volunteers. "There are no charges for our refreshments, instead we offer people the opportunity to donate, if they wish. If not, then the refreshments are a gift from us," Maurice explained.

Some of the food is provided by members of Holy Trinity Woodburn, and some is purchased from local outlets. After costs, all other profits are passed to local, national and international worthy causes.

Anne and Maurice were prompted to establish the Fellowship Café after helping with a tour by a Fields of Life Children's Choir in 2013. "During this concert tour we visited several churches in Northern Ireland. Some were 'dead', some healthy, and some were vibrant. The vibrant churches all had areas for coffee and fellowship," Maurice said.

"Although our own church provided coffee after the Sunday services, we felt God was prompting us to provide something extra during the week.

"Our Youth Fellowship renovated one of the rooms in our building to include a coffee bar, and on Thursday April 10 2014 we opened our doors for the first time.

"We stood behind the counter praying somebody would walk through the doors.



Fellowship Café volunteers - from left to right: Jack Blair, Hazel Blair, Joanne Shimmmon, Terry Shimmmon, Joan Maxwell, Anne Langley, Maurice Langley.

The rest is history!"

The initiative now has seven front-line volunteer staff and a 'small army' of other casual helpers. The café's popularity is down to the warmth of the welcome; the choice of refreshments; the relaxed atmosphere; the comfortable seating area; the simplicity and concept of the occasion; and the friendly, caring volunteer staff.

"We have our regular visitors who see the café as part of their week," Maurice said. "Visitors have also come from much further afield, including the USA, Canada, Australia and Germany.

"As volunteers we enjoy the fellowship among ourselves. We enjoy getting to know members of our congregation. We particularly enjoy the fellowship with strangers and the opportunities put before us to speak of Jesus Christ and to be good and faithful servants to God.

"Being part of the team has also been a source of comfort and encouragement when we are experiencing difficult times in our lives."

Lisburn Three do time in Crumlin Road

After a torrid time in Crumlin Road Gaol in March, the Lisburn Three – the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright, Roy Totten MBE, and Neville Jones of Abaana Ministries – were released having raised their combined bail target of £5,000.

The bail dosh will now be diverted into the costs of constructing a new toilet block at the Dr Andrew McAvoy Primary School in northern Uganda. A young team from Lisburn Cathedral, where Sam is Dean, will be travelling to Uganda this summer.

First to be released was Roy, a parishioner in Glenavy. He was followed to freedom some time later by Neville, a Lisburn Cathedral parishioner. Dean Sam had a longer incarceration, and was spotted nervously pacing the walls of his bare cell. But his exemplary conduct, befitting a Dean of Connor, earned him the respect of his gaolers and he was released back into the community that evening.

His longer hair and the stubble on his chin were the only outward signs of his long imprisonment. Mentally, though, the effect of this experience on the Dean will take longer to determine.

As well as building the much-needed toilets at the Dr Andrew McAvoy Primary School, the Lisburn Cathedral team will hold a three-day holiday Bible club, and work with street children in Kampala.



A stressful time for Dean Sam Wright, as he remained behind bars after the release of his co-accused, Roy Totten and Neville Jones.

Get ready for Streetreach 2018!

Not long now until Streetreach 2018 – Connor Diocese's fantastic mission experience for young people.

Connor Youth Council will be partnering with Glenavy Parish for Streetreach for a second year, and the Streetreach team will again be joined by a group of Americans from Christ In Youth.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: "The aim of Streetreach is to bless people and communities in the name of Jesus. It will commence on Tuesday July 3 at 7pm at Glenavy Parish Halls with dinner and an evening of worship, team time and orientation.

"Wednesday, Thursday and Friday will all start with morning worship and teaching. Following this, the team will be heading out to get involved in a wide range of activities - practical work, kids' and youth work, prayer and much more! Streetreach will finish on Friday night at 9pm and everyone is to be collected from Glenavy Parish."

Young people who have completed Fourth Form/Year 11 can sign up for a full residential option, while young people who have completed First Form/Year 8 can come on a daily non-residential option.

Gareth Campbell, youth worker at Lisburn Cathedral and contributor to Streetreach said: "Streetreach is a great opportunity following on from Summer Madness to allow young people to respond in their faith and put it into practice. One of our young people spoke about the impact of Streetreach as he was sharing his testimony to our church.

"It has given several of our young people the opportunity to live out their faith along with other young people from different parishes across the diocese."

Castle weekend

Connor's annual residential weekend for young people takes place from Friday September 7 to Sunday September 9 at Castlewellan Castle.

Groups from different parishes will take part in a variety of sessions together, and enjoy a range of activities and great food.

The cost of the full weekend is £50 to anyone booking before Saturday June 30, or £60 if booked after this date.

Anyone interested in booking or learning more about this weekend is asked to contact Christina Baillie on 07753312405 or christinabaillie@connordiocese.org



The team from St Mark's, Ballymacash, Lisburn, was among the winners on the day.

Sporting talent at Big Connor Contest

Almost 100 young people demonstrated their sporting talents when they took part in the annual Big Connor Contest on February 24.

This year's tournament, which attracted 12 teams from eight parishes, took place in St Michael's Parish Hall, Shankill Road.

There was plenty of good-natured competition as the teams took each other on in volleyball, 4 square and blatterball. They also completed riddles and challenges to keep their brains active throughout the event.

And a record amount of pizza was eaten to combat all that running around!

Christina Baillie, Diocesan Youth Officer, said: "We loved having so many groups from across the diocese compete for the Big Connor Contest Shield. It was really closely fought between the teams with a very high level of sporting ability shown. A big thanks to Connor Youth Council and St Michael's Parish for hosting us so well."

The joint first place winners were St Mark's, Ballymacash, St Paul's Juniors & Lisburn Cathedral Juniors.

Cooking up a treat in Ballymena in preparation for Summer Madness

Summer means Summer Madness and young people from the diocese who attend the festival will be looking forward to enjoying the hospitality of the Connor Sub Camp.

In preparation for the annual youth camp in Glenarm, the young folk from St Patrick's, Ballymena, hosted a soup lunch on February 25 to raise money for their Summer Madness 2018 experience.

On the same day in Tulsa, Oklahoma, some of the young people who will visit Northern Ireland in June to serve through Christ In Youth also held a soup lunch to raise funds for their trip!



The Ballymena team which organised the soup lunch to raise funds for Summer Madness.

The American team will partner with young people from Connor Diocese at Summer Madness, where they will be serving on staff during the festival, and will then help the Connor team run Streetreach in Glenavy Parish.

The Middle Church 350th anniversary

This year The Middle Church, Ballinderry, celebrates the 350th anniversary of its consecration.

To mark this milestone, and coinciding with European Heritage Weekend, Ballinderry will host an historic tour of The Middle Church.

The tour will start at Ballinderry Church Hall from where visitors will be taken to the ancient church ruins and graveyard at Portmore. Then on to The Middle Church for a short talk on the church itself, before moving to the parish church, where hangs the coat of arms of Charles II, said to have hung in Lord Conway's Castle at Portmore.

There will be refreshments in the church hall at the end, and visitors can view an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia showing parish life through the years, along with other items of interest.

On September 9, there will be a special afternoon service in The Middle Church to mark the 350th anniversary and to look with hope to the future. This will be followed by afternoon tea.

Jeremy Taylor's Church, known as The Middle Church, is situated between the ruins of the pre-Reformation Church at Portmore (also known as Laa Lou) and the Parish Church at Upper Ballinderry. Building commenced in 1664 and the church was consecrated in 1668.

Jeremy Taylor, after the execution of Charles I to whom he was chaplain, was brought to Ulster and resided in Portmore near Lough Neagh. At the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he proceeded to reinstate Prayer Book worship by restoring the church at Portmore, but the local



The Middle Church, Ballinderry.

people did not attend.

He therefore conceived the idea of building a church in a more central position in the Parish. The roof timbers, three-decker pulpit and pews from the church at Portmore were used in the Middle Church.

Bishop Taylor did not live to see the Middle Church consecrated. He died in 1667 aged 54 and is buried in Dromore Cathedral.

On the erection of the new Parish Church in 1824, the Middle Church fell into disuse and became dilapidated. In 1902 Mrs Samuel Walkington restored the church as a memorial to her late husband.

The Middle Church is regarded as one of the finest examples of a plantation church in Ulster and illustrates the conditions under which worship was held 350 years ago. It has featured in many television programmes including the BBC television series Dan Cruikshank's 'Written in Stone.'

Visit www.ballinderryparish.org for further information.



A service of Choral Evensong was held in St Bride's Parish Church, Kilbride, on May 13 for the first time in a number of years. The service was led by the Rev Canon David Humphries, and the church choir was joined by guest singers from other churches. The lessons were read by the Rev Canon Walter Laverty. The choir was conducted by St Bride's Director of Music Beth Aiken and accompanied on the church organ by Dr Joe McKee.



Richard Yarr.

BBC 'Sounds Sacred' role for Richard

Richard Yarr, Director of Music at Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, for the past 25 years, is the new presenter of BBC Radio Ulster's 'Sounds Sacred.'

Richard is an organist, musical director and classical music producer.

The rector of Christ Church, the Ven Paul Dundas, said: "I am really delighted for Richard in this appointment. It is a huge honour for him to follow in the footsteps of Canon Noel Battye and he will bring his gifts and faith to this role and bring blessings to those to who listen to Radio Ulster at 5pm on a Sunday."



The Rev Denise Acheson was introduced as part-time Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Holy Trinity & St Silas with Immanuel, Ardoyne, on May 6. The service was led by the Rural Dean, the Rev Tracey McRoberts, in Holy Trinity Church.

Highly commended

Diocesan magazine 'Connor Connections' was highly commended in the Church of Ireland Central Communications Board's 2018 Competition.

'Connor Connections' was commended for its 'Varied content with in-depth features, for example on chaplaincy posts. Well laid out with a good use of headings to break up page spreads.'

New Rural Deans

Connor Diocese has three new Rural Deans. The Rev Tracey McRoberts, rector of St Matthew's, Shankill, has been appointed as Rural Dean for Mid Belfast; the Rev Kevin Graham, rector of St Bartholomew's, Stranmills, is now Rural Dean for South Belfast; and the Rev John Rutter is the new Rural Dean for Derriagh.



Kindergarten children in Mekelle with Shannon and Cherith.

Making a difference for kids in Ethiopia

Shannon Boyd, 21, is a student and parishioner at Ballinderry. Her voluntary work for Operation Rescue, a charity in Northern Ethiopia, has resulted in land being secured for a new centre for children.

The land is in the remote city of Maichew. Shannon visited in January when she was able to pray on the site that will soon house a building to transform young lives.

Shannon first visited Mekelle, Northern Ethiopia, to volunteer with Operation Rescue with friend Cherith Watson in 2016.

"The initial feeling of abject hopelessness and the sight of desperate circumstances almost overwhelms you on an African visit," Shannon said. "In Operation Rescue, these feelings are soon overcome by an incredible awareness of God's love being shared by the most gracious, Christ-like people I have ever met.

"More than 500 children are catered for in the Mekelle centre in various ways. Orphan children are resident on site. Everyone is fed and offered clean washing facilities. Children are treated with dignity and valued as precious in the eyes of God."

She said each session began with devotions. "The Operation Rescue team serves in an incredibly selfless manner witnessing a dependence on God that we in Northern Ireland know very little about. Day-to-day practical requirements are sought through joyous prayers by them believing God will supply and meet needs.

"To witness such faith is an incredible privilege and life changing for both Cherith and I."

Before leaving for home on that first trip, the girls offered to fundraise to help grow the work. The project's general manager shared a vision he had for another centre in the city of Maichew.

"Returning home, we approached the trustees and long-standing supporters of Operation Rescue and discussed the project. The challenge of raising over £200,000 is immense but after prayerful consideration it was decided to step out in faith believing God would provide," Shannon said.

"It has been a joy to be involved and over the last year we have been making new contacts and introducing the project to new donors."

Shannon and Cherith returned to Mekelle for the month of June 2017, and again in January this year. On their latest trip they learned that local authorities have given 5,000 square metres to Operation Rescue. The girls made the journey to Maichew. "The new site is incredible. We were able to pray on and for this land," said Shannon.

"We continue to pray that many children will attend the new centre when constructed and the Kingdom of God will be extended in an amazing way."

Anyone interested in learning more can contact info@operationrescue.co.uk

Religion, Equality and the Constitution

In this year's Church of Ireland Theological Lecture at Queen's University, Belfast, on March 20, Professor Julian Rivers examined the relationship between 'Religion, Equality and the Constitution' in a UK context.

Professor Rivers teaches legal and constitutional theory, public law, and law and religion at the University of Bristol. The lecture, which is sponsored by the Church of Ireland Board of Education (Northern Ireland), was delivered in Riddel Hall.

The Church of Ireland chaplain at Queen's, the Rev Barry Forde, chaired a wide-ranging question and answer session following the lecture.

Scaling new heights for parish funds!



Congratulations to the courageous trio of Katrina McKechnie, Giselle Coulter and Jackie Coulter (above) whose daring abseil from the roof of the Europa Hotel has raised almost £5,000!

The team was raising funds towards a £10,000 target for the purchase of chairs for the newly-renovated interior of St Stephen's Church in Millfield.

Team Ministry Leader, the Rev Canon James Carson, said phase two of the renovation project was almost complete.

Inspiring production of Handel's Messiah

Holy Trinity Woodburn hosted the Merry Opera Company production of Handel's Messiah on April 7.

One hundred and eighty people enjoyed a wonderful evening of music, voices and drama. The familiar words and music of the Messiah was enhanced with the dramatisation of it by the singers.

The rector, the Rev Dr Alan McCann, said: "This was a truly moving and inspiring production which brought new life and insight to the familiar."

Uplifting Connor Festival Service

The Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher, was the preacher at the Diocese of Connor Mothers' Union Festival Service held in Belfast Cathedral on March 18.

MU branches from across the diocese were present for this annual service when banners from 39 branches were paraded.

In his sermon, Bishop McDowell spoke on the theme which was 'In Mary Sumner's Footsteps.'

This was the first Festival Service with the new Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde. The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, was also present.

The opening hymn, 'In the name of Christ rejoicing,' was new to Connor. It was written at the request of MU Winchester Diocese, and sung at the General Meeting in Edinburgh last year.

Diocesan President, Mrs Valerie Ash, said: "It was a very uplifting service."



The Mothers' Union East Connor hosted a Prayer Breakfast in Cloughfern Parish on February 24. East Connor area is a new area combining north Belfast and Carrickfergus. Speaker at the breakfast was the Diocesan Chaplain, Archdeacon Stephen McBride, who talked about his travels to Uganda. Pictured are St Patrick's, Whitehead, branch members.

Lambeg present washbags to A&E department

Members of Lambeg Mothers' Union delivered 93 washbags to the Royal Victoria Hospital A&E Department.

Angela Bennett and Muriel Abernethy, organised a branch meeting which members spent filling the washbags with items including toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, facecloth, comb and a packet of tissues. A prayer card is also added to each washbag.

Sister Olivia Wilson and Dr Phil O'Connor met the members at the A&E Department. Olivia thanked the members and said the washbags were a great help and support to their work at the RVH.



Derriaghy Mothers' Union celebrated their 60th anniversary with a special service in the church on April 15 followed by refreshments in the hall. The guest speaker was Miss Maud Kells, a former missionary nurse in the Democratic Republic of Congo, now retired.

Health issues in focus

Almost 60 women came together in the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim, on April 28 to take time out for themselves at a Women's Health and Wellbeing morning organised by Connor Mothers' Union Young Members' Committee.

The ladies heard from four speakers, three talking about mental, physical and spiritual health and a fourth about Mothers' Union itself.

The women were drawn from parishes all over Connor Diocese and were a mix of Mothers' Union members and non-members. Diocesan President, Valerie Ash, opened the morning, and Alison Skillen, Vice President of Action and Outreach, introduced the speakers.

First on the programme was Lynda Bryans, former radio and television journalist, who spoke about her own mental health journey and how she had found great support not only from her family and friends but also from her faith.

Dr Laura Bunting, a General Practitioner in Broughshane Medical Practice, spoke about the importance of physical health and gave advice regarding screening, diet and exercise.

The speaker on spiritual health was the Rev Elizabeth Hanna, rector of St Nicholas' Parish in Belfast.

The last speaker was Wendy Halligan, Mothers' Union Young Members' Representative for Connor Diocese, who spoke about the work of Mothers' Union.

At the end of the morning, each lady was given a 'goodie bag' containing literature on Mothers' Union, health screening and some treats.



Three teams representing Connor MU took part in the Belfast Marathon on May 7 to raise funds for Mums In May, supporting people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Five members undertook the eight-mile marathon walk, while two teams from north Connor consisting of not just MU members but also their friends and family participated in the team relay walk. The members (pictured) who completed the eight-mile walk were Caroline Glover, Roslyn Graham, Wendy Halligan, Yvonne Little and Geraldine Ramsey.

Aurelia's ministry to support local ladies

Aurelia Kelly, wife of Trevor, curate of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion, has been developing a very special ministry to women in her local area.

Aurelia was inspired to establish a group to reach out to women by the kindness of a friend who supported her as she battled with post-natal depression nine years ago.

She describes it as a 'horrible illness.' "I felt called to develop Ladies' Ministry from my own personal experiences," Aurelia said. "I had been a full-time lecturer in further and higher education for 22 years, but I know that the Lord is directing my path both in this work in our three parishes and also in my new role as a Community Ambassador with NI Chest, Heart & Stroke."

With the backing of her rector, the Rev Canon Derek Kerr, Aurelia launched ME at 8 last October, with a presentation by Tropic Skincare. The following month, ME at 8 welcomed Lindsay Robinson of the successful 'Have You Seen That Girl?' blog as guest speaker.

Lindsay talked about her experiences of post-natal depression, and afterwards the ladies at ME at 8 pledged to raise funds to buy candles for the Bags of Hope Lindsay hands out to mums in the community.

ME at 8 is now a regular fixture in the parish calendar. Ladies meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 8pm. Aurelia has been very successful in attracting sponsorship for treats and surprises, so there is always a chance for the ladies to go home with something special to pamper themselves!

There are also days and evenings out, for example a trip to Belfast for a 'Shop and Dine' Day in January and a similar outing is planned for the North Coast in mid June.

Aurelia and her friend Amanda McCallion, from the Parishes of St Colmanell's Ahoghil and Portglenone, launched Fit for ME Fit for LIFE on April 13, a ladies' fitness



Aurelia Kelly, founder of ME at 8, surrounded by fashion items brought along for the talk on fashion by Deirdre Chestnutt, Unique Personal Stylist, at the February meeting

initiative to mark National Walking Month involving all five parishes.

They invited ladies to come together for a walk followed by talks from a guest speaker on four evenings in May. The first evening was hosted in St Colmanell's by Aurelia, Amanda and Sarah Simpson.

A total of 46 ladies took advantage of the good weather to attend on week two. The walk that evening encompassed a Riverside Walk and Randalstown's Viaduct. Patricia McVeigh, from the Facebook Page Walking Updates, travelled from Dungannon to support the group.

The speaker was story teller Liz Weir. Aurelia said Liz's words had spread joy. "We smiled, we laughed, we were joyful. Liz taught us to treasure the spoken word and keep it alive for the next generation."

Week three saw another great walk followed by inspirational speaker, Lorraine McCaw from Belfast City Mission.

On the final May evening, which attracted 63 ladies, ME at 8 welcomed back Lindsay Robinson and enjoyed a Vintage Supper as a fundraiser for Bags of Hope.

Learn about ME at 8 on Facebook.



Sixty three ladies took part in the final Fit for ME Fit for Life walk and talk on May 30.



Mr Nigel Dodds, MP for North Belfast and Deputy Leader of the DUP, with guests who attended a meeting at Connect Base on February 9.

Politicians visit Connect Base

Nigel Dodds, MP for North Belfast and Deputy Leader of the DUP, visited Connect Base, the Connor Diocese Centre of Mission, Shankill Road, on February 9.

Mr Dodds was invited by Mr William Humphrey, DUP MLA for North Belfast. Also present were Belfast City Councillor Alderman Brian Kingston; Nicola Verner of the Integrated Services for Children and Young People team, based at the Spectrum Centre; Tom Scott from St Matthew's Parish; and representatives of Cavehill Christians Against Poverty (CAP).

Connor Church Army Evangelist Sister Karen Webb spoke about the programmes and projects in which the team at Connect Base are involved, including the Baby Basics initiative, the after school drop-in club, the Transforming Lives For Good (TLG) programme which is offering one-to-one weekly coaching to six children and the North Belfast CAP.

Further meetings are to be held to coordinate a joined-up approach to issues facing the community in north Belfast.

Bangor Missionary Convention

The theme of the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention (August 24-September 1) is 'Pray the Lord of the Harvest.'

Most events will be held at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor, but there are also events in the Baptist Church and in Belfast, Lurgan and Magherafelt.

Alistair Begg, Senior Pastor at Parkside Church in Cleveland, Ohio, will lead morning Bible studies. Key speakers include acid-attack survivor Pastor Umar Mulinde from Uganda and Petr Jašek from Release International.

For full programme details, visit www.worldwidemission.org.



The new Archdeacon of Dalriada, the Ven Paul Dundas (front, second from right) with the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright (front, second from left), and members of the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor.
Photo: Norman Briggs RnBphotographyhni.

New Archdeacon of Dalriada installed

The Ven Paul Dundas, rector of Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, was installed as Archdeacon of Dalriada at a service in Lisburn Cathedral on March 4.

The preacher at the service was the Rev Dr Pat Mollan of the Church's Ministry of Healing: The Mount.

Paul was installed in the Chapter of St Saviour, Connor, by the Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright.



Parishioners from the United Parish of Christ Church and St John's, Ballyclare, enjoyed a Family Weekend at the Kilbroney Centre, Rostrevor. Teaching was led by the Rev Dr Heather Morris, Methodist Church in Ireland Home Missions Secretary. Christina Baillie, Connor Youth Officer, led the programme for young people, while Diocesan Children's Officer Jill Hamilton organised a programme for the children. Ian Hannah led the worship and former Dean of Connor, the Very Rev John Bond, led Sunday morning's Family Communion.

The new Archdeacon was educated at Strabane Grammar School and Portadown College. He studied Environmental Science at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, and his Bachelor of Theology is from Trinity College, Dublin.

He was ordained in 1991 for the curacy of St Mark's, Portadown, and was instituted as rector of Ardrea and Desertcreat in March 1995. He moved to St Aidan's, Belfast, in June 2000 and became rector of Christ Church, Lisburn, in January 2005.

Paul has held various roles within the wider church, including Chairperson of Armagh Diocesan Youth Council, Chair of the Northern Regional Youth Council, Chair of Connor Diocesan Training Council, and is a member of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland and Connor Diocesan Council. Paul presently serves on the Council of Reference for the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and for a time also led their work in Ireland on a voluntary basis.

In 2016, he chaired the group of church leaders in Lisburn that organised 40 days of 'ReLENTless' prayer for Lisburn city.

Paul has a deep interest in Global Mission and was on teams with Crosslinks and Youth for Christ while in his teens and 20s. In 2000 he was part of a team from Armagh Diocese to visit Arua, northern Uganda, working in the Bishop Alison College with theological students from southern Sudan.

Since he has been rector of Christ Church, the parish has embarked on a mission partnership with Fields of Life, building a school at St Apollo, Kisizi, in Luwero Diocese, Uganda. In 2010 Paul spent nine weeks of a sabbatical in Asia with the Anglican Church in Singapore, as well as travelling to Indonesia to visit churches.

Paul is married to Nola and they have three children. He succeeds the Very Rev Stephen Forde, now Dean of Belfast.

Appointments to parishes across Connor Diocese

There have been a number of clergy appointments in recent months.

The Rev Andy Heber, rector of Clogherny Parish, Diocese of Armagh, has been appointed vicar of Carrmoney. Before ordination in 1997, Andy was a Diocesan Social Worker in South Liverpool Deanery, and has also served in St Helens, Kirkby.

The Rev David Lockhart, rector of Cloughfern Parish, has been appointed rector of the Grouped Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo.

David has a BSc in Chemistry. He has

served in St Mary's, Crumlin Road, and St Stephen's and St Luke's in Belfast. He is North Belfast Rural Dean.

The Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, rector of Agherton Parish, has been appointed as rector of St John's, Malone, Belfast.

Stephen has a degree in Economics and Geography and previously worked as a geological technical assistant.

He has served in Bangor Abbey and Templepatrick and Donegore, and has been in Agherton Parish since 2007. Stephen was appointed a Canon of St

Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, this year.

The Rev Stephen McElhinney, former rector of St Columba's, Derryvolgie, took up the post of Mission Director of SAMS UK and Ireland in June. Stephen has a degree in Optometry. He has served in Kill o' the Grange Parish Church, Dublin, and Drumglass Parish, Dungannon.

Two new curacies have also been announced. The Rev Derek Harrington will join Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, following his ordination on September 9, and the Rev Ian Mills will join the Parish of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo.

150th anniversary in Jordanstown

St Patrick's Parish Church, Jordanstown, is celebrating 150 years of worship and praise.

Celebrations got underway on March 11 with a Mothers' Day Family Service. On March 15, the parish hosted the Bishop of Connor's Lent Talk, and the following evening there was a concert to celebrate St Patrick's Day with the Mossgrove Singers, Killyglen Accordion Band and St Patrick's Church Choir.

A busy weekend continued with a visit by Lord Eames, former Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, accompanied by Lady Eames for the Patronal Festival on Sunday and this was followed by a Parish Lunch.

On April 15, the Very Rev Arfon Williams, former rector of St Patrick's, presented Thoughts on Easter.

During May there was a plant sale and cake fair on May 12 and on May 19 the parish hosted a Family Fun Day.

On June 4, there was a Uniformed Organisations Service, and on June 10 an All Age Service in the Church Hall with Jill Hamilton, Connor Diocese Children's Project Development Officer, followed by a barbecue.

The Rev Campbell Dixon MBE, former curate of St Patrick's, will be at the church on September 9 at 11am for an All Age and Organisations Service.

On September 28, there will be the launch of a book detailing the history of St Patrick's Parish with Dr Roger Dixon, a local historian.

There will be a Harvest Concert on October 19 at 7.30pm with Ballyduff Silver Band



Rector of St Patrick's, Jordanstown, the Rev Canon Nigel Baylor, with Lord Eames, who visited for the Patronal Festival celebrating the parish's 150th year.

and the Clare Chorale and on October 20 an Open Day will be held at St Patrick's with organ music and tours of the church.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Family Service will be held at 11am on October 21, and Harvest celebrations continue at 6.30pm with Canon Barry Paine, rector of Ballinderry, Tamlaght and Ardboe.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, will visit for Confirmation on November 4, and the anniversary celebrations conclude on November 25 with a visit from the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, followed by supper and an interview with the Archbishop.

Happy 150th to all at St Patrick's, Jordanstown.



Former Dean of Belfast, the Rev John Mann, receives a Lambeth Cross from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Lambeth honour for former Dean

Former Dean of Belfast, the Rev John Mann, has been awarded The Lambeth Cross by the Archbishop of Canterbury for his ecumenical work in Belfast.

The Most Rev Justin Welby presented the Cross to John at a ceremony in Lambeth Palace, London, on April 6.

John spent much of his ministry in the Diocese of Connor. He was Dean of Belfast from 2011 until September 2017.

The Award was given for 'courageous and visionary leadership which affirmed diversity, fostered healing and made Belfast Cathedral a place of welcome as a sacred, civic space at the heart of a divided city.'

Big Sing is back!

The second Connor 'Big Sing' takes place on September 16. The Dean and Chapter of Lisburn Cathedral invite everyone who has an interest in contemporary Christian music from Praise Groups, Musicians and Choir Members to attend.

There will be training in contemporary Christian worship songs during the afternoon, and these will be included in the evening Praise Service at 6.30pm.

To book, email Garvin.Jess@lisburncathedral.org.



Mr William Harper with the rector of Kilbride, the Rev Canon David Humphries.

William made Reader Emeritus in Kilbride

During Morning Prayer at St Bride's Parish Church, Kilbride, on February 11, the honorary title of Reader Emeritus was conferred on Mr William Harper.

William has been a very active member of the Church of Ireland and has given exemplary service in a number of different roles including that of Diocesan Lay Reader from 1971-2016.

He has been a parishioner in St Bride's

for many years and as he stepped down from a number of duties in the church in recent times it was felt that his excellent service should be acknowledged.

William will be able to use his new title for the rest of his life.

He continues his service to the church as a member of the choir and as a regular reader of the Gospel.

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